

# HEALTH PROMOTION & PREVENTION INITIATIVES NEWSLETTER

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## Initiative Spotlight



### Assessing effectiveness of a mail and telephone call reminder system

#### The health issue

Unfilled or missed medical appointments waste valuable resources. Missed screenings also impact military readiness. The issue of screening appointments not made or not kept is a persistent problem throughout the Army.

#### Program implementation

This project assessed the effectiveness of a mail and telephone call reminder system for increasing the number of screening appointments made and kept. The project also identified reasons for missed appointments.

#### Project outcomes

- 995 women were targeted for Well Woman appointments, with a priority on 78 Soldiers in that group.
- Collaboration within the MTF matched Access to Care appointments with Well Woman mail and telephone reminders.
- After project launch, the lab processed 1,711 pap smears from April to November 2005, compared to 420 pap smears from the same time period in 2006.

#### Impact of this project

Evaluation of project data led to business process changes that improved the efficiency of the appointment scheduling system, increased the number of Relative Value Units (RVUs), increased screening compliance rates, and decreased missed appointments.

## Ideas from the Field

### How long should class sessions be?



Consider scheduling some longer health education class sessions instead of only one hour time blocks. Although the logistics for longer classes may present some challenges, the longer sessions allow for more intense discussion and may be more effective in bringing about health behavior change.

## Prevention Resources

### 2006 National Health Observances

Use the calendar of national health observances as a tool to plan specific health promotion programs, stimulate awareness of health risks, or to focus on disease prevention.

<http://www.healthfinder.gov/library/nho/nho.asp>

## Program Pointers

### Creative measures of program impact

Keep your weight management or fitness programs fresh by thinking outside the box. Go beyond the old standby measures of weight or BMI. Consider using creative ways of measuring program impact. Use the measures at the beginning at the program, then at interim points and program conclusion in order to determine progress. For example:

**3-minute step test:** Have participants do the step test for 3 minutes, then measure heart rate.

**Plank position hold:** Measure how long participants can maintain that position. Make the goal 60 seconds. Also ask participants how hard it was to accomplish on a scale of 1 (easiest exercise ever) to 10 (very hard).

**Bike effort:** Measure how far can participants "go" in 5 minutes and also their heart rate. Make this a team challenge by dividing participants into teams; use heart rate as the tiebreaker if team distances are the same.

**Nutritional orienteering:** Set up a nutritional orienteering course for families. Spread out cones in a big field with questions at each cone. Don't make the questions too hard; multiple choice questions work well. Families answer each question and then run together to the next cone. Change the main topic of the course weekly. Award points based on right answers and completion time. This activity measures nutritional knowledge and works in fitness, as well.

Simple and safe challenges like those above enable participants to work towards a goal without getting hurt. These "non-standard" measures allow participants to assess their progress in a creative, non-threatening way.

## Don't Reinvent the Wheel!

The Navy Environmental Health Center has many resources for building resiliency and family strengths. Resources for leaders, articles and literature citations, and ready-made presentations are also included on the web site.



<http://www-nehc.med.navy.mil/HP/STRESS/Resilience.htm>

## HPPI News & FAQs

### Annual Force Health Protection Conference – Albuquerque, NM

The core conference will be held from 8 – 11 August 2006. Professional skills workshops will precede the core conference from 6 – 7 August 2006.

The **Health Promotion for Readiness Track** will include sessions that address:

- The impact of health on force readiness and workplace productivity
- The role of health promotion and preventive medicine in the war on terrorism
- Challenges facing health promotion in Army transformation
- Integrative approaches to chronic preventable disease in the Soldier population
- Strengthening Army families by building community capital
- Weight management research and initiatives throughout the Army
- Building resilience and focus

General conference information and a complete schedule for all tracks in the Conference are available on the conference website at:

<http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/fhp/>.

For more information about HPPI, or to see past issues of the HPPI newsletter, visit <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/dhpw/Population/HPPI.aspx>.

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